

November 2006

R

The Mortar & Pestle

Long Term Care Newsletter



Shelly's Medication Services - 1504 Grundy's Lane - Unit #8 - Bristol, Pa. 19007

Gender & COPD in Cancer Patients

Women with lung cancer are less likely than men to have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), according to a recent study (Chest (2006;129:1305-1312). The data indicate that clinicians should not rule out a possible diagnosis of lung cancer in women where COPD is absent.

Researchers compared the prevalence of COPD in men and women newly diagnosed with lung cancer. Before diagnosis, 151 men and 143 women took pulmonary function tests to determine their lung function.

Among the men, 110 patients (73%) had COPD, compared to 75 female patients (52.5%)--a significantly lower prevalence. "Using the presence of COPD alone as criterion to determine a patient's risk may miss women with lung cancer," the authors noted. They stressed that more well-established risk factors (e.g., age, smoking history) should be considered when screening patients for lung cancer.

Dr. Feelegoode's Corner Hangovers

With the holiday season approaching, we are concerned that some may over do it a bit and wind up suffering from a nasty hangover. Our readers are surely not in this group, but may be called upon to provide advice to the afflicted.

Drinking robs the body of B vitamins and causes dehydration. Take Vitamin B Complex with a full glass of water before going to bed to prevent most symptoms. Besides being hydrating, the water gives a head start on diluting the alcohol.

Also, fructose helps the body burn alcohol faster. Drinking vodka & orange juice may prevent some hangovers or lessen the severity. Drink fruit juice or swallow some honey when rising in the morning to get rid of any remaining alcohol quicker.

Alcohol also causes blood vessels to dilate, resulting in the morning after headache. Coffee in the morning constricts the vessels and reduces the headache. Or, cups of strong tea with honey gives water, caffeine, and fructose all at once. The caffeine acts as a diuretic, giving more reason to take in lots of fluids.



This month's words of wisdom

The best thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time.

... A braham L inodn

Light Levels Reduce Errors

A paper released by the nonprofit Center for Health Design, offers evidence that appropriate exposure to natural and artificial light in hospitals and clinics is critical to the health and well-being of both patients and staff.

More specifically, key research findings show that higher light levels are linked with better performance of complex visual tasks and that light requirements increase with age. By controlling the body's circadian system, light impacts patient outcomes by reducing depression, decreasing length of hospital stay, improving sleep and circadian rhythm, lessening agitation, easing pain, and improving adjustment to night-shift work among staff. If it works in hospitals, why not nursing homes, too?

Med D

Remember, the enrollment period for joining or changing a plan is from 11/15 to 12/31/06. Even if already in a plan, seniors should check, because formularies and/or coverages could have changed. The limits of the "donut hole" are different for 2007.

Some sources of help are 1-800-Medicare, www.medicare.gov, www.eldercare.gov, Catholic Social Services (215-587-3916) and Phila Corp Aging (215-765-9050). SMS clients may of course call us. (215-785-6616)



Prescription Descriptions

Plavix Gets New Indication

The FDA has approved the use of Plavix (clopidogrel bisulfate) for patients who have had a type of heart attack called acute ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI) and are not going to have coronary artery repair.

Acute STEMI is a severe heart attack caused by the sudden, total blockage of an artery. In such patients, Plavix prevents subsequent blockage in the already damaged heart vessel, which could lead to further heart attacks, stroke, and possibly, death. According to the American Heart Association, an estimated 500,000 Americans have a STEMI heart attack each year. Serious side effects of Plavix include bleeding and, rarely, low white blood cell counts or thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura (low platelet counts with spontaneous bleeding and clotting). Plavix is manufactured by Bristol-Myers Squibb

Congress May Ease Ban on Rx Drug Imports

A deal may have been struck in the U.S. House of Representatives that would lift the ban on prescription drugs brought back to the U.S. by Americans who purchased the medications in Canada. The tentative agreement would allow Americans to bring back up to a 90-day supply of medication without being stopped by customs agents. It does not apply to Internet purchases.

Mailing List Update

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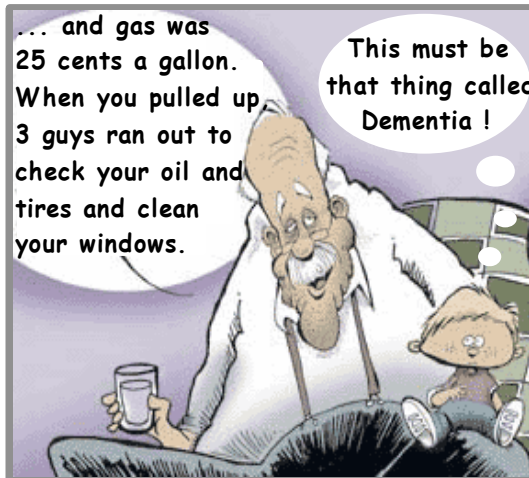
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